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Benjamin Cosor Elementary school has a new Assistant Principal, Pamela Carr.

STORY AND PHOTO
BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

Benjamin Cosor Elementary School (BCES) has a new Assistant Principal, Pamela Carr. While it is her first year in the role, she brings with her over 16 years of teaching experience to the new job.

Initially setting out to study law at Fordham University, she discovered her passion for teaching. During her junior year in law school, she had the opportunity to volunteer and assist summer school students.

After spending time helping the pupils, one student she recalled had a challenge with the work, and working with Carr, they were able to overcome and understand the assignments being taught to them.

Carr said, "It really just got me thinking that education is more

for me."

She changed careers and went for her Master of Science in teaching at SUNY New Paltz.

Carr has taught kindergarten through the fifth grade, and after a long career in teaching, wanted to make a change and remain in education, but in a different way.

"I consider myself a lifelong learner," said Carr.

While she decided on her next steps, she began taking administrative education classes, and realized that being in an administrative position was a way she could better serve her students in the classroom.

"This position is great because I'm still working closely with students. And I can impact more students across all the grade levels," added Carr.

In joining the district, Carr said she has been fortunate to have mentors early on in her tenure in Fallsburg. "I'm able to bounce ideas off of [Principal Mary Kate Stinehour] and our great staff here," she said.

Carr says she starts her day early with the school around 8 a.m. and, after meeting with some staff, she is part of the bus arrivals.

"We have the opportunity just to say, 'Hey, make it a great day. How was your evening?' So that's one of my favorite things to start the day," said Carr.

From there, she will go to some classrooms to observe and assist when needed.

Carr says that because of her background in teaching, she feels she can relate better to her teachers, students, and staff.

"I have been able to work with students of many different ages. Teaching for so long when I'm talking with a teacher, I am putting things into perspective and trying to understand how they're feeling," said Carr.

She said she had expected the challenges of entering a new district and not knowing anyone at first, but she said that the students and staff have been so welcoming that it has made the transition easier.

She wants to continue and foster the feeling of community that exists at Fallsburg.

"We all work together, students included, as one big family taking care of each other and taking care of the school like it is our own," said Carr,

Carr says she speaks to a lot of the parents and always wants to know how to better serve their children. She wants to maintain an open line of communication with the parents via email or telephone.

Carr said, "It is important to me for the parents to know that when your child is here, we take care of them, just as they're our own."

School Scene

'A Look Inside the Fallsburg Central School District'

Published by
Catskill-Delaware Publications, Inc.

Publishers of the

**SULLIVAN COUNTY
Democrat**

(845) 887-5200

Callicoon, NY 12723

January 10, 2022 • Vol. CXXXIII, No. 62

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Time out! Getting students back on track

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

Fallsburg is taking a new approach to discipline, and depending on the offense, will offer in-school suspension to a student as opposed to the out of school equivalent.

While the in-school suspension is nothing new, Fallsburg Central School District's Junior-Senior High School Principal Kyle Roddey says that out-of-school suspension does not change a student's behavior. This new approach helps bridge a gap.

The district understands the trauma that the COVID-19 pandemic might have had on the students, and by keeping them away from the school, the district feels the alternative is better.

"They still get academic and emotional support, even while they are serving the suspension," said Principal Roddey.

The student, instead of being sent home with a packet of work to do, will go to a designated classroom where they will have teaching assistants, teachers, and social workers come in to speak and help the students.

"We want our students to know that even when they make mistakes, we still love them; we still want to support them," said Roddey.

Furthermore, the district is working with Bethel Woods Center for the Arts to bring art therapists two days a week to work with the students.

So what lands a student in in-school suspension? Roddey says they are usually low-level offenses, like insubordination and disruptive behavior.

While the student receives the instruction during the suspension, "We also teach good behavior, and we teach good character and good decision making," said Roddey.

Roddey added that this enables the students to not fall behind in their classes and work on ways of dealing with frustration.

One of the aides that helps the students when they are in dealing



Lisa McAdoo works with the students to get them back on track.

with in-school suspension is Lisa McAdoo.

Roddey says that McAdoo, "Truly cares about them (students), she understands character education, she understands relationship building," said Roddey, who says he counts on her to help him connect with a student who is troubled.



Gabrielle Geilman, an English teacher for the district, helps connect with the students and offers assistance on missing work for students in in-school suspension.

McAdoo is well-known around the school and can be found at many football games, DJing and providing motivational music for the students and fans.

When she meets with the student, she says she tries to be herself and uses that to help relate to them.

McAdoo herself had a chaotic upbringing and struggled in school, and was homeless at one point in Philadelphia. When she made a move to Fallsburg, she said, the teachers and staff fought for her to

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make it.

She eventually graduated high school and earned a scholarship to play basketball and attended college, and has now returned to Fallsburg to pay it forward.

"I'm putting myself in their shoes because I was there... I really need to spend some time with them (students) and get them back on track because it's about restoring their relationship with the school so they can function and not be anti-school," added McAdoo.

Gabrielle Geilman is an English Teacher who works with the students in the alt-learning programs and helps those missing assignments in their English classes.

In this program, she is able to offer one-on-one help to the students. In doing so, she is able to relate to the student by not only helping with the work but also helping them with the reason they ended up in in-school suspension.

"I think it's very, very beneficial," Geilman added.

Patrick Farrlley is a History teacher who also participates in the program.

Patrick Farrlley is a History teacher at Fallsburg.



With over 20 years of teaching experience and teaching in other parts of the world, Farrlley says it is about connecting with the students and being able to assist them with missing work.

Farrlley says he likes that the students are exposed to multiple teachers, social workers, and art therapies, which helps them.

One student, Farrlley recalls, was close to failing her classes and was missing an assignment that was due the day she was in the in-school suspension program. He was able to work with her and she completed the work, as well as passed the class.

"We're definitely seeing students making better decisions based on what they're learning in the program," said Roddey.



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Photos: Fallsburg CSD students and projects.

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Fallsburg offering full-time Pre-K

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

The Fallsburg Central School District offers a full-time Pre-K instead of the two half-day sessions it had done previously.

Led by teachers Amy Saravia and Mindy Conciatori, the full day better prepares young students for when they enter kindergarten.

The program is for children who are three-to-four years of age when they enter the program. The program has two classes, each with 18 students, and each classroom has one teacher, a teacher's assistant, and an assistant.

So, what happens during a typical day?

Buses, parents, and guardians start dropping off the young students at 9 a.m., with sessions beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Soon after, the class meets for its morning meeting; the students go over the date with calendars, sing, take attendance, name recognition, and have breakfast.

"Everything that we do has a purpose," said Conciatori. "Even walking to the classroom. They're learning to walk in a line, stand behind one another, and have insight. From the minute they come in, they're learning how to interact and proper behavior in school."

Soon after breakfast, the young students begin working on their fine motor center skills with a gym teacher who visits the class every other day.

"The kids love it," added Conciatori.

Afterward, there is a special time which can include music, art, or gym. Then the children begin their English Language Arts using stories and a program called Three Cheers, which is new to the district and helps with ELA lessons.

The children will then break up into smaller groups and be able to explore the play items set for them and the various sensory tables so skills learned can be targeted in a smaller setting.

If any student faces any language barriers, the pre-k is equipped with a bilingual staff to help the child exceed and learn.

For example, during story time, if the student's first language is Spanish, a bilingual aide will translate the story for the student so they can follow along.

When it comes to lunch, the students learn to set up for lunch in a group setting and learn to talk to each other while they have lunch in the classroom.

Suppose the child has a food allergy, like a peanut allergy. In that case, all the parents and guardians are notified of the allergy in the form of a letter in English and Spanish asking them to be mindful of ingredients and what comes into the classroom.

The school's cafeteria is always made aware so alternatives can be made available to the students who suffer from allergies and to help eliminate cross-contamination.

After lunch, the children will be encouraged to take a nap.

Once they are up from a nap, they continue with learning and jump right into math and reading.

Soon after that is snack time, the classes prepare to be dismissed and picked up by the bus or by the parent or guardian.

Saravia says everything is a learning moment, including dismissals where the children learn and apply the skills they garnered throughout the day, such as putting on their coats, getting their backpacks on, and listening to instructions.

There is constant communication with the parent or guardian as the district uses a system



Pre-K students enjoy some creative time during art.

called Class Dojo where parents or guardians can see what their child was working on that day, see what is coming up on the calendar, and if they choose to do so, they could receive a photo of their child during the day, and they are able to communicate with the teachers.

On the first day of Pre-K, the parents and guardians are en-

couraged to come and help assimilate the child into the new environment. The teachers talk to children who are having a hard time when their parents or guardians leave them at the class and let the child know they are in a safe space and it's their job to keep them safe.

Conciatori said, "[We] just really make them feel comfortable."

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